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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Mr. Alderson's article is based on a paper which he wrote for the "Settings" section of a second year methods course. In this assignment, each student attempted to identify some aspects of knowledge and practice that are specific to his current field placement. The material in this article should be of help to school social workers, field instructors, and teachers of social work as they attempt to identify content essential to effective practice of social work in the school setting.

Mrs. Williams' article, first published in an educational journal, is helpful in clarifying the contribution of the teacher to the healthy growth process of the child. In a setting such as the school in which an integration of the services of various disciplines is essential to constructive work, it is important that each worker understand clearly the responsibilities and potentialities of the others—such clarification and understanding frees each discipline to make its maximum contribution.

With present emphasis on the inter-disciplinary approach to children's problems, it is timely to examine the process recording of conferences between the school social worker and the teacher. Through a working relationship, focused on the child, it is evident that both the teacher and the school social worker contributed to the child's growth. Miss Quattlebaum has illustrated that part of team work which is so essential to good school social work practice.

THE SPECIFIC CONTENT OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

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Importance of Specifics: Relation of Generic to Specific

Today in social work there is a great deal of discussion concerning its generic and specific aspects. This is to a great extent a manifestation of the particular stage of growth social work is moving through at the present time. As a neophyte among the professions, it is at a point where continuous attempts at self-definition are taking place in order that it may assert its difference, its usefulness, and the unique contribution it can make to the social order. In so doing social work is aligning itself with what might be called the more venerable professions.

The profession of social work, as in all professions, rests on an organized body of knowledge and a related body of method. This body of knowledge, concepts, and techniques is continually undergoing augmentation and alteration. Social work especially is undergoing fluctuations at this time due to its efforts to define itself, although the anchoring base of knowledge in any profession undergoes change and increase. In social casework, the common body of knowledge, concepts, responsibilities and method which characterizes this work wherever it is found constitutes its generic aspect. The generic aspects are not found anywhere in pure and isolated form, but are found as part of the work in various specific fields. The presence of a person needing help to make some social adjustment, plus a generic base of knowledge and methods to aid this person, constitute a unifying aspect to all social casework.

Historically, and at the present time, the method by which the generic aspects of social work have been discovered has been through specific practice in various settings. Through trial and error, trial and success procedures, plus the transmission of this information to fellow workers, a body of knowledge has been constructed which forms a base for all social work practice. In each setting, however, a specific application of this knowledge is necessary due to special needs and problems, plus other uniquenesses of the individual setting.

Throughout this paper the term "specifics" will be used in a flexible way, and will usually not refer to discrete characteristics found only in

the school setting. They will often be found in other settings, but not to the same degree or extent or with the same orientations. Usually they will not assume the same importance to understanding and practice in other settings as they do in the school setting.

Why is it important to search for specifics? A tentative answer to this has previously been given in speaking of social work's search for identity, plus the relation of generic to specific. Grace White has given a number of excellent reasons as to why this is important. She is of the opinion that "accurate identification of the specific characteristics of particular practices may in time help to secure:

- (1) greater clarification of the common elements in all social work practice;
- (2) better understanding of the essential content in social work education;
- (3) more accurate use of the term "specialization" in social work;
- (4) better selection, guidance, and placement of personnel and possibly greater mobility of personnel;
- (5) more appropriate emphases in staff development, supervision and research in specific fields."¹

School social work can be said to have a generic base common to all social work practice. It has more in common with social work practice that uses casework as the major process than that which uses other processes, such as group work or community organization. Despite this generic base, however, it can be assumed that, due to inherent differences of each setting, a specific application of generic concepts and principles is necessary.

Specifics Related to the Educational Setting

The offering of school social work services is not the primary purpose of the educational system. An immediate difference is thus seen between this setting and other settings where the offering of social work services is the major purpose. A similarity between school social work, and social work practiced in hospitals and courts is evident, as in each instance social work is a part of a much larger whole and must understand and represent the purpose of the whole. It also becomes evident that in set-

¹ White, Grace, "The Distinguishing Characteristics of Medical Social Work", *Medical Social Work*, Vol. I., No. 1, September, 1951.

things such as these the relating of social work to other disciplines in a purposeful manner becomes a major task.

The primary purpose of social work in the school separates it from social work practiced in all other settings. The primary aim of school social work is to help the child having difficulties in school obtain optimum benefit from his school experience. It is to be desired of course that, as in all social casework, the client is enabled to attain a better adjustment in his other life situations.

School social service has an important contribution to make in carrying out the educational goals of the school. It is important that the school social worker have a grasp of current educational philosophy, and also a knowledge of the history of education in this country in order that he understand the traditional role of the school. For example, some of the conditions and changes which brought about school social work services in the early part of the twentieth century (1906) were:

- (1) an enlarging school population and compulsory attendance;
- (2) the concept of individual differences;
- (3) a shift of concern over the intellectual life of the child to the whole child, and an attempt to adapt the school program to the actual needs of a growing child;
- (4) and, the concern of sociologists and social workers with how the environment might be changed to meet individual needs.²

In three of the above four points are contained some basic tenets of current educational philosophy. Basic to contemporary educational philosophy is the concept of individual differences, compulsory education, and the concern for the child. These should be understood by every worker in the schools, for they provide the framework within which school social work functions. The worker should also become aware of the relationship of social work philosophy to educational philosophy, and should be able to see the fundamental agreements between the two that draw them together. Unless the worker feels that his philosophy of social work and that of education essentially coincide and mutually augment one another, he cannot effectively serve the children who come to him for help.

For the worker in the schools, a knowledge of certain laws relating to children and to education would seem necessary. A general knowledge

² Fink, Arthur E., *The Field of Social Work*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1949, pp. 228-267.

of the attendance law, the child labor law, the school lunch act, and laws for the protection of children would seem to be a minimum for effective work. In individual localities there are specific laws affecting the practice of school social work, and these should be known.

It appears essential that the school social worker know *school* organization, structure, and policy. This is not only a specific to the school social work setting as compared to other settings, but in each community and building where school social work is practiced this can be a highly individual affair. The worker should know about the other jobs in the school system, what they entail, and the responsibilities connected with these jobs. This is important for integration, a prime function in school social work. As part of this knowledge of other jobs, the worker will know the lines of responsibility, or delegations of authority in the school system and in individual schools. It is necessary that he know his own position in this hierarchy of authority and responsibility in order to function effectively.

The principal is usually the highest authority in the individual school, and the school social worker, along with other faculty members, is responsible to him. The principal is primarily an administrator, and the position implies authority and leadership. The authority is delegated, but the leadership is a part of the principal's personality and determines to a great extent the attitudes in the school. It is therefore important that the worker help the principal understand the service he performs, and its value to child and school. The worker will only become an integral part of the school when the principal accepts the worker and his service.

In light of the above discussion, it would appear appropriate to discuss a concept unique to school social work. This concept proposes that each individual school has its own personality, its pattern of function, and its pattern of resistances. This goes beyond the limitations or capacity of a particular teacher or group. It is related to, and exemplified in the relationship of the school to the community, the director to the staff, teacher to teacher, and in specific attitudes toward the child. This uniqueness is due to several factors. Some of these are related to the personality of the principal, the attitudes of the board and community, and the interpersonal relationships established within the staff. It can readily be seen that the school social worker has a responsibility to know the personality of the school he serves, its influence on the children in the school and on his relations with children and teachers. The worker will,

with other faculty, help modify the school's personality when it seems detrimental to its pupils.

Within the organization and personality of the school are school policies. The worker needs to be aware of how these policies influence interprofessional relationships, and more especially, pupils. The value of the worker is in helping the school function more effectively, as well as helping the child overcome his difficulties. It is apparent that this cannot be done if policies of the school are not adhered to, for they are designed to help the school reach its goal. This does not mean, of course, that a worker should not with other faculty attempt to alter policies recognized as not helpful to children. The attempt to change such policies must be done through recognized channels.

A knowledge of curriculum seems to be an essential specific for the school social worker, and there seems to be a trend towards having school social workers on curriculum planning committees. This would include knowledge of general curriculum and classroom content of children who are receiving help. Closely related to this is the cumulative record. This record contains the yearly grades of the pupil, his test results, teacher comments, and other information. It is necessary that the school social worker have knowledge of the various items in the cumulative record, such as tests commonly used, how they are scored, and how they should be interpreted, as well as the grading system used and the meaning of the grade symbols. This record, oriented to the educational progress of the child, can yield valuable diagnostic information to the social worker. The cumulative record can also serve as a focal point and a common meeting ground for different disciplines working within the school.

Inherent in all that has been said is that the school social worker should feel he is a part of each school with which he is associated. The particular problems faced by each school and its faculty should be of natural interest and concern to the school social worker. Through this, school personnel will recognize and accept him as one of the staff. Only when the school social worker is able to feel he is a part of the school will he be fully accepted by school personnel, and most effectively serve the children who come to him for help.

Specifics Related to Practice

The job of the school social worker may be said to embrace five major functions:

- (1) Casework service to the child having difficulties in school;

- (2) Creative inter-professional relationship with the teacher, and other school personnel;
- (3) Casework services to parents;
- (4) Work with other social agencies;
- (5) Interpretation of the program to the community.

Considered separately none of these functions is unique to school social work. The uniqueness lies in their purpose as it relates to the school, which creates a particular constellation of these functions taken as a group. Each function has an emphasis and an orientation unlike similar functions in other settings. If it were possible to plot these differences imposed on these functions by their orientation to the purpose of the school, there is little doubt but that they would have a gestalt or constellation all their own.

These functions will be treated individually and in some detail in the following pages. In so doing, it is hoped that specifics related to each function will be pointed out and that the reader will see how each function is composed of many elements unique to school social work.

Casework Service to the Child

Social casework services are given children who are referred to the school social worker because of difficulties that are recognized in the classroom or other school situations and are related to social, emotional, and educational adjustment.

- (1) In this type of referral, the child may be aware of school social work or of his need for it. The school social worker must assume responsibility for helping his client understand the service and how it may help him.
- (2) The child referred to the school social worker may not have a free choice of accepting or rejecting the service, and as mentioned previously, usually does not voluntarily ask for help. The extent to which the child may have the freedom to accept or reject the service depends to a large extent on the magnitude the problem assumes in the eyes of school personnel. In situations where the behavior of the child is so disrupting to the school that other more stringent measures would be taken if the child does not accept the aid of the school social worker, the worker must assume a constructive authoritative role in working with the child. The child must be

helped to understand that other measures will be taken if he does not accept the service, and in effect, if he does not change. The worker's feelings about authority enter in here, and if he is not comfortable with authority he may use it in a manner detrimental to his client; he may emphasize with his client against authority, or use his authority in a harsh manner.

It appears that a uniqueness of school social work is pointed up in respect to the client's choice of accepting or rejecting the service, for in most agencies the policy in this regard is universal for all prospective clients. In school social work however, the policy is situational, and dependent on the way school personnel view the problem. This aspect of school social work places a responsibility on the worker that is different, and demanding, in that he may at times have a voluntary casework role with a client, and at other times his role may take on authoritative aspects.

- (3) The school social worker maintains a characteristic casework role in working with the pupil, and assists the pupil in his adjustment to his experience in school. He is aware that the educational experience is something unique to each child, and that the child has feelings about being different. The school social worker realizes that often he is the new element in the child's situation that is needed to initiate movement. The worker is aware that the child can be helped only through an experience the child himself can take on and make his own. The relationship between the worker and child is all important, and is based on the ability of the child to accept help, and of the worker to skillfully give help.
- (4) As a member of the staff of the school the worker shares certain educational objectives, but brings a different professional self. He recognizes that there are both advantages and disadvantages to his close affiliation with the school. He works in a way different from others in the setting, but is aware that his value to the child is in his likenesses to the school as well as his differences in ways of working.
- (5) The school social worker is aware of the dynamic interplay between home, school, community, and child, and is especially cognizant of their effects on the child. As part of the service to the child there is integration with other school personnel, casework services to the parent, and work with other social agencies as the situation warrants.

Relationship with Teacher

The school social worker should recognize that work with the teacher forms a vital and essential aspect of helping the child. The teacher holds the final responsibility for the child in her classroom. The worker should be aware that the teacher has responsibility for teaching the group on the one hand, and for giving understanding to the individual child on the other. The worker understands that due to the primary responsibility of the teacher to the group, a basic function of the school social work program is that of offering the child who has problems in the group a school relationship different from that of the group.

- (1) The relationship with the teacher is a creative inter-professional relationship, never a casework relationship. Although the teacher may at times be helped to understand her part in the situation concerning the child, the relationship is of a constructive inter-professional nature oriented towards helping the child. The school social worker must not usurp the teaching function, or the teacher-pupil relationship, but will work with teachers to help them handle their classroom problems more effectively. The teacher is quick to sense it when the worker identifies himself too strongly with the child. This only serves to align child and worker against the teacher, to the ultimate detriment of all concerned.
- (2) With the introduction of school social work services in the schools, it is recognized that teachers need to know more, not less, about children's personality and behavior. The interpretation of children's emotional difficulties to teachers is an important function of the worker. The teacher is helped to make use of this information in her own professional capacity.
- (3) Information considered by the worker to be useful to the teacher is shared with the teacher. This places a particularly heavy burden of responsibility on the school social worker, for he must decide what information would be useful to the teacher, and also know to some degree the teacher's capacity to use certain information to the benefit of the child. Sharing information with the teacher often involves the use of confidential information. Due to variances in background and training, teachers often do not place the same stress on confidential information that social workers do. It might be important in many instances for the worker to interpret the importance of confidentiality to the teacher, since sharing of information is essential to integration.

- (4) The worker also recognizes that values of his services to the child are direct, through his relationship with the child, and indirect, from caseworker through teacher to child.

Relationships with Other School Personnel: Integration

- (1) The worker should work with principals, teachers, and other school personnel towards early recognition of personality difficulties. This demands a continuing skillful job of interpretation on the part of the school social worker.
- (2) The worker should be able to effectively interpret to school personnel factors of a social and emotional nature that are related to the child's difficulties in school.
- (3) The school social worker often must assume the principal responsibility for integration. He usually must take initiative in arranging for case conferences between teachers, parents, other school personnel, and workers from other agencies who are interested in the child. The intense need for integration in the school system requires a degree of skill from the worker in this aspect of the work that is greater than in most other settings.
- (4) The school social worker must have a thorough knowledge of the school in order to participate effectively in faculty meetings, committee meetings, and other group projects.
- (5) Other resources within the school will be used by the worker in applicable situations. He must have adequate knowledge of resources within the school and be able to constructively work with people from other disciplines in order to most effectively help his client.

Casework Services to Parents

Work with the parent is an integral part of helping the child. The worker's association with the school provides an easy access of the worker to the home, and of the parent to the worker at school. In this respect the school offers the support of its recognized authority in working with the parent.

- (1) In working with parents the worker must know how parents feel about school and work with this feeling on an individual basis. The way parents perceive the school is almost always related to their own past experiences. The worker must have an ability to

relate to the parental feeling about school, whether it is positive or negative, and help parents with their feelings.

- (2) The worker must understand and be able to work with parents' feelings about the child who is not doing well in school. There is a wide variety of parental feeling concerning the child who is not getting along well in school, and the worker must understand and work with these feelings in individual situations.
- (3) The worker must be able to recognize and understand his own feeling about the parent of the child having difficulties in school, and must be able to help the parent with problems concerning the child in school. There is a danger that the worker may over-identify with the child and be unable to adequately help the parent with his problems in relation to the child.
- (4) The worker has a responsibility for helping the parent understand the service he offers, and how they can work together. It is the worker's purpose to help the parent understand the child's problem in school, his attitudes, capacities, and adjustment in relation to school.
- (5) The worker may at times help parents recognize that their problem is beyond the scope of the service he offers, and will help refer them to the appropriate social or community agency, if available.

Working with Social Agencies

- (1) When the child needs help beyond the scope of the school, the school social worker utilizes community resources. In working with other agencies the school social worker shares with workers of other agencies the school's understanding of the child's capacity and his adjustment to school.
- (2) When both the school social worker and another agency are working with a child or family, each agency should through conference carefully delineate and delimit its responsibility. The worker must take responsibility for defining the areas in which he will be able to work as a school social worker, and be willing to share responsibility with another agency.
- (3) The school social worker is in an excellent position to interpret the school to social agencies, and social agencies to the school, as he is a member of both disciplines.

Interpreting the Program to the Community

- (1) The school social worker helps interpret the school to the community, through taking part in P.-T. A., work on committees, etc. Similarly, he will carry on interpretation through talks to community groups.
- (2) The school social worker often represents the school in community social welfare activities.
- (3) The school social worker may assist with parent study groups.
- (4) The school social worker may have the role of encouraging parents to participate in general community activities for better school and community life.

Concluding Statement

It is not assumed that all the specifics of school social work have been examined in this paper. An attempt has been made to point up areas in which the school social worker should have special knowledge or awareness in order to practice effectively. In light of the importance of detecting specific elements of practice, it is hoped that further efforts will be made in this area.

STRENGTHENING FAMILY LIFE

How Much Can the TEACHER Do?¹

IRENE H. WILLIAMS, Caseworker
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Dilemmas aren't new to teachers, but today's teacher faces one of the most exasperating and frustrating pair of horns ever to confront any group at any time. On the one hand, she is expected to educate "human beings" not "scholars". Her aim is to develop well-rounded, happy, constructive future citizens, not to teach isolated skills. She may feel "old hat" if she concentrates on the three R's, and a failure if she does not promote each year a roomful of creative, well-adjusted personalities.

On the other hand, her study in the field of human growth tells her that a child's basic personality pattern is the direct product of his home experiences. An account of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children, published recently in this magazine, underlines the widespread acceptance of this conviction: "In every talk, in every workshop we came back to a recognition of the importance of *family life* as the foundation of personality development."²

This is a difficult paradox. *Theoretically*, the teacher is not primarily responsible for the child's ability to establish happy social relationships and constructive learning habits. *Practically*, she feels pressure to assume the burden of his character formation. Guilt and confusion result. Some teachers ignore the whole controversy and go on teaching as they have always taught. Some feel guilty over neglecting the majority of the class in concentrating on a few obviously maladjusted students. Many feel anxious, insecure, and groping—unsure of goals and uncertain of results. Most find less reward in their work than they should. Not knowing whether they are therapists or educators, they cannot know how to measure their achievements. Time was when a teacher got real satisfaction out of developing a group of good readers, with legible handwriting, and creditable ability in mathematics and other fundamentals. Today's teacher does not feel satisfied with such accomplishments alone. She must now ask herself in addition "How well adjusted is this child's total life? How satisfactory are his relationships? Does his social behavior

¹ Reprinted from *Hawaii Educational Review*, April, 1952.

² *Hawaii Educational Review*, March, 1952.

show growth? These are hard things to measure. In fact, there are as yet no completely satisfactory tools, practical for use in the classroom situation, which do give accurate measurements of such intangibles.

Only by clarifying her own role in the child's development and by realistically defining her own responsibility and goals can the teacher (or anyone) be comfortable in her daily work, and find real satisfaction in her total job. What does a child need and what can the conscientious teacher realistically expect of herself in relation to these needs?

For optimum development every child needs (in addition to such desirables as a healthy body and normal mentality) truly loving parents and a home life which steadily provides physical, financial, intellectual, moral, social, and emotional security to all family members. Deprivations in any of these areas are likely to result in gaps in the stability of the personality. However, we have come to know that the most damaging lack of all—perhaps the only lack which leaves permanent scars—is deprivation of emotional needs in infancy and early childhood.

A child needs to be a wanted baby, with parents mature enough and happy enough in themselves to be able to give him the gentle care and attention which gradually creates his first sense of trust. As a toddler he needs flexible parents who can permit him to take his first steps (literal and symbolic) towards independence without withdrawing the necessary dependent satisfactions—parents who can let him walk alone when he is ready but will be there to soothe the bumps when he flops unexpectedly. As he becomes more aware of himself and more sensitive to others, he has increasing need of a home where social relationships are harmonious and affectionate, where his parents like each other and him, where attitudes towards others are warm and generous.

In such a home a child is loved for what he is. Normal naughtiness, hostile feelings, and a reasonable amount of negative behavior are tolerated. Discipline is given, but love is not withdrawn. Mistakes are allowed for, but kindly guidance follows them. Standards are high, and parents "stand for" constructive moral and ethical ideals. But the expectations are not rigid or impossible to attain, and they are grounded in an understanding of human frailties as well as human potentialities. The child is allowed to be himself and not a carbon copy of an exemplary older relative or a remembered Elsie Dinsmore. Individual differences are enjoyed, not deplored.

In such an atmosphere, a child develops security—a *good feeling about himself and his own worth*. He has confidence in himself and

others, freedom to enter into new experiences, and ability to establish positive relations with people. In such an atmosphere a child prepares for school without fear, undisciplined social habits, or emotional blocks. Because his needs to date have been richly satisfied, he is ready for a new level of experience. His problems in making an adjustment are ordinarily minor and of short duration. He settles down more or less contentedly to the job of getting as much out of school as is possible for him.

This, then, is what the child, every child, needs before he ever comes to school. He needs the security of a normal, happy home during the first five or six years of life, and he needs it more than he will ever need anything else. *This, the teacher cannot give.* She may regret that many of her students lack this kind of emotionally secure background, but she should not hold herself accountable for such lacks, nor expect herself to be able to fill them, nor feel that she has failed if she cannot handle every personality problem she encounters.

What can she do, then? Revert to the more circumscribed curriculum and concerns of former years? Dismiss as impractical the ideal of "working with the whole child towards a better integrated personality"? Turn all children presenting problems back to the parents, since they, not she, are fundamentally responsible?

With teachers as overburdened as they are, turning to any of these possibilities would be understandable. A more constructive approach, however, would seem to be the delimiting of areas of responsibility and the concentration within a narrower field upon those things which she can do and which she is in a critical position to do.

She should first of all be as familiar as possible with human behavior, with what is desirable and undesirable in family living, with what factors promote healthy growth and what factors inhibit it, what behavior at a given age indicates sound development, and which symptoms spell trouble. She does not need to become a specialist in psychology nor saddle herself with extra "courses" unless her own genuine interests make this rewarding to her. Mental hygiene experts have pulled together a fascinating body of literature—as fascinating as novels because they are the stuff of which novels are made. Familiarity with this, informal discussions with other teachers or interested friends, seminars such as those being offered this summer of Family Life Education³—and most important of all, a

³ Workshop in Family Life Education—University of Hawaii June 23-July 11 and July 14-August 1. (Sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction and the University of Hawaii.)

continuing curiosity about why people act as they do—will give her sufficient background to look sensitively at the children she teaches.

The good teacher has always seen her students as unique individuals, and has tried to increase their security and learning-readiness through kindness, patience, and ego-building encouragement. As love is the common denominator of a good parent, so patient understanding is the common denominator of a good educator. This she must never lose. It is only if this does not bring the desired results that she must look for additional aids. The failure of this approach is one of the signs that something is deeply wrong in a child, and is in itself an aid to diagnosis.

When the teacher is satisfied that she has made every reasonable effort without stimulating the desired response from the child, the chances are that this is not a classroom problem but one having twisted roots in an unhappy home. To “knock herself out” further on untangling the difficulties would be unfair to the rest of her students and unfruitful to the mixed-up child.

At this point other resources must be used. Many schools employ school social workers who are trained to offer specialized services to parents and children in relation to such problems. The school social worker may help with specific problems. In schools in which there is no school social worker, some member of the school staff may be designated to talk with parents about the use of community agencies.

The class situation itself is often used to promote healthy family life and add to the understanding of behavior through informal discussions. It is not necessary to set aside a special hour for Family Life Education. The perceptive teacher, always on the alert for material which will be interesting and valuable, extends discussions of regular subjects—why did little Mary (in the *Secret Garden*) begin to look prettier after she made friends with the robin and the gardener? What kind of a man was Napoleon, and other power-hungry leaders? What lies beneath racial prejudices of Nazi-ism, and underneath strong biases in the people we know?

More pointedly, the teacher picks up from an informal comment, from literature, or pictures, on the normalcy of hostile feelings, jealousy of brothers and sisters (particularly new babies), occasional feelings of inferiority. It is tremendously reassuring to the over-sensitive child to learn that *all* parents let off steam once in a while, that it is good to let out your feelings at times, that discipline does not mean rejection, that

adults as well as children make mistakes—that they are sometimes sorry about them but don't know how to tell us—that no one is, or should expect to be, "perfect".

In such ways, the classroom becomes truly a "living" experience, concerned with "life" and centered on the "lives" assembled together. In such discussions the relaxed atmosphere is more important than the "content". The child's security grows from being free to express himself, from having a kindly adult think his ideas are important, and from learning that other people's feelings are much the same as his. If any child seems unduly upset or volunteers bizarre ideas, it is wise merely to accept his reactions, redirect the discussion, and ear-mark the incident for further individual exploration.

The teacher can also work directly with parents—again, not all of them, but some. The signature on a report card is all the teacher sees of some parents; but she can see, learn to enjoy, and acquire skill in working with those who do make overtures or respond to invitations to co-operate.

A basic problem of all of us who work with children is our quick identification with the child, and—if there are problems—our hasty condemnation of parents. That this attitude is felt, not spoken, does not prevent its getting across to the parent. Nor are we slow to respond to their unexpressed critical attitude towards us. Too often the parent-teacher conference is marked by mutual defensiveness, and is more concerned with justifying individual roles than in understanding the child. "I don't know why you can't handle him at school—he's no problem at home," or "Nancy's so unco-operative. Do you always give her her own way at home?" Such comments quickly put both parent and teacher on guard, their abilities questioned and their integrity threatened.

It is of supreme importance for the teacher to remember that even the most inadequate parent is doing the best he can at a given moment. He, too, had parents, deprivations, lack of love, insecurities. Very often he had unhappy school experiences, and he sees you not as a professional adult interested in his child, but as a threatening symbol of authority and criticism. He may be twice your age, but if his own school days were traumatic, he becomes emotionally (and unconsciously) a frightened eight year old. This would be easier to handle if his inward fears were expressed directly in apprehension. Often, however, they are covered up with belligerence. (How many bond issues for better education have

been voted down by taxpayers' unconscious negative feelings about their hickory-stick school days?)

If the teacher sees in each problem-parent a troubled human being, and can interpret his truculent attitude as directed not to *her* but to unfortunate experiences with other "authorities" long ago, she can be sufficiently warm and accepting to make at least a dent in the hostile armor. One brief conference with a friendly, non-condemning teacher will not revamp a grossly pathological home, but it may make possible better parental co-operation with the school and eventually create a receptive attitude towards desired changes.

A mother who had been the despair of schools, social agencies, and courts because of her marginal home and undisciplined children and who had resisted every approach made to her, was called to school by the teacher of her seriously disturbed son. Expecting the familiar criticism and well equipped to rebuff it, she found herself instead weeping at the teacher's comment, "You must have worried and suffered a lot over Sammy." She was able to accept referral to a counseling agency and said later that this was the first time anyone had seemed concerned over *her*, had assumed that she wanted to be a good parent, and had suffered over her failure. Only with this affirmation, and the increased sense of dignity it gave her was she able to pull herself together and look for appropriate help.

A teacher who can approach a parent with liking and sympathy does more than she can ever know or see directly. Nothing is such a "shot in the arm" as encountering, even briefly, someone who likes us and senses sterling virtues in us. The teacher can usually find *something* for which she can give the parent approval and reassurance. Praise for showing an interest, if nothing else: "It's wonderful when busy parents like you are interested enough to keep in touch with us." A teacher-parent conference may bring no visible, dramatic changes in a child's adjustment, but if the parent goes home feeling better about himself (having a better opinion of his worth—feeling *more secure*), you have, at least temporarily, reduced tension and anxiety in that parent and in the home.

Teachers may forget (thanks to the low pay and heavy demands with which the public rewards them!) that they still have a great deal of status. To be talked to as an equal, to have one's opinions elicited by a person with a reputation for intelligence and learning is, in itself, an elevating experience for many parents. When this is accompanied

by real warmth and humanity, you have given a great deal. Then is the stage really set for fruitful discussion of the child in whom you are both concerned.

Parents and teachers are the most important influences in a child's life. His security grows when those adults like, respect, and trust each other because his world becomes more stable and trustworthy. People are pulling in the same direction, not at cross purposes. When the child notes differences in the beliefs or methods exemplified at home and school, these can be interpreted as *differences*, not as *wrongs* or *rights*. ("My mother says it's this way" . . . "Yes, many people believe that, but now we are studying another point of view.")

Not all of the job of building vital personalities, happy homes and a free community belongs to the teacher. Parents are still the key figures with major influence upon emotional growth. The teacher can only supplement their efforts. She does this by preparing herself for her broader responsibilities through awareness of human dynamics and attention to her own mental health. She does it with children through the creation of relaxed, supportive learning-situation where usable information about behavior supplements academic skills; through perception of children whose problems are too deep for handling in the classroom and making appropriate referrals for help elsewhere. She does it by breaking down barriers between parents and schools—seeing parents as people, letting them see her as a human being, too—and together engaging in a real partnership for the good of children.

Society's demands on the teacher in terms of children's personality development may continue to be unrealistically high. Such demands are the expression of parents' deep anxieties and feelings of failure. It would not be helpful to reject this implicit plea for assistance, nor yet to try to do the whole job herself. She must try to look at the over-all problem, decide which areas she can tackle, and then devote her skill and energies where they will be effective. She must not feel apologetic or guilty about not doing more, for her role is a crucial one, and her contribution and rewards can be truly great.

FOCUS THE CHILD: THE TEACHER AND THE VISITING TEACHER WORK TOGETHER¹

VIRGINIA QUATTLEBAUM, Visiting Teacher

Tifton and Tift County, Georgia

In this paper I will not be concerned with how referrals are made, or when and where conferences are held, but with what happens between teachers and visiting teachers when they are trying to help the same child. When I talk with a teacher concerning a child whom we are both interested in helping, I consider it a conference in which two professional people are sharing with each other what each of us knows about the child that will help the other to contribute more effectively to the child's school adjustment.

Visiting teachers can work with teachers in several ways, some of which are more effective than others. A common method, I believe, but perhaps the least effective is that of "reporting" to each other. A teacher reports to the visiting teacher whatever "grievances" or problems she may have regarding a certain child. The visiting teacher, after an interview with the child, a home visit, or some other investigation, reports to the teacher what she has learned. This type of teacher-visiting teacher conference may go on indefinitely without much benefit to the child or it may grow into a sharing of what each knows that will help the child in using the school or the school in meeting the child's needs.

The "question and answer" method is another rather ineffective way visiting teachers and teachers sometimes try to work together. A teacher refers a child because she wants the visiting teacher to get certain kinds of information for her, or vice versa, the visiting teacher contacts the teacher only to ask questions about a child who has been referred from another source. Both visiting teachers and teachers have feelings against this method, depending upon who is asking the questions. How familiar is the teacher's comment or complaint that visiting teachers ask questions and get all the information from other sources? Often this feeling prevents the development of good working relationships between teacher and visiting teacher. On the other hand visiting teachers sometimes resent being asked to get information for the teacher. The visiting teacher in either case has a responsibility of interpreting her function.

¹ "Visiting teacher" is the term used for the "school social worker" in Georgia.

It is important for teachers to know why visiting teachers want and need certain kinds of information from them and to be assured that any facts which will help them in working with a child will be shared. When teachers make requests which do not come within the scope of the visiting teacher service, they should be referred to proper sources and given an explanation why the visiting teacher cannot handle such a request.

The method of working together which will be most helpful to the child in school is the co-operative, inter-professional, sharing relationship between teacher and visiting teacher. In order for their work together to be effective the teacher and visiting teacher must have mutual respect and acceptance of each other as professional people who have different functions, responsibilities and skills for helping children make maximum use of their school experiences. The teacher must be recognized as the key person in the child's school experience. The function of the visiting teacher although closely related does not replace but supplements the teacher's function. When teachers ask for help with children, visiting teachers, especially if they have been teachers, are apt to give suggestions or advice about classroom procedures or other ways of dealing with children. It is important for us to remember that we can help the teacher understand some of the child's needs but that she can find ways of meeting them in her own classroom.

Questions often arise in regard to how much information a visiting teacher should share with a teacher. It is not necessary nor helpful to share all the facts. Some are irrelevant; some are of such a confidential nature that the visiting teacher does not have the right to share them. It is the visiting teacher's responsibility to share information which will help the teacher in working with the child.

The following excerpts from three case records show some process of visiting teacher-teacher conferences:

HARRY

Harry, age 11, grade 6, was referred by the principal because he was babyish, cried easily, and was afraid to fight when other children picked on him.

10-5-49 I talked briefly with Mrs. A, Harry's report teacher, to arrange for an interview with Harry. She described Harry as babyish, spoiled, and petted at home, and lazy. She said he "shows off", makes faces, seeks attention in other ways, talks babyish, can't stay put, and hurries to finish work which is usually poorly done. Sometimes he works ahead of the assignment in his work book. He has poor work habits but this is characteristic of most of the group. However, he doesn't do as well as the average for the class.

10-5-49 Mr. Green, physical education teacher, seemed surprised that I was

interested in Harry. He has not seen evidence of any problem. He said, "He has a very nice mother."

11-2-49 Conference with Mr. Green. I told him that I had been seeing Harry every week since I talked with him and observed in the physical education class. I recalled that at that time he had thought of Harry as not having a particular problem, and I could understand this because in the first few interviews he gave the appearance of being a very happy little boy with few worries. However, I had found out that he is pretty fearful about some things (fighting among them) and that he seems to want to do things more to please others than for his own satisfaction.

Mr. G. said that he thought he had been babied at home and yet if he didn't come up to his mother's expectations she always wrote notes or came to see about it; however, she is always nice about it. Said Harry's size is against him too and he has cried easily when other kids "sort of" picked on him. Then Mr. G. remarked that he had noticed that Harry is not quite so "babyish" lately. He hasn't seemed as silly as he did.

I told him about the soccer game Harry had talked about and said that I thought that gave him some satisfaction for himself. I said I had noticed the way he (Mr. G.) had worked with individuals in the group and I felt that there were many ways he could help Harry to find pleasure in doing things for his own satisfaction and enjoyment and maybe to learn to "fight" a little and not be afraid.

He mentioned that the kind of wrestling and "fighting" they do in physical education should help him. He had thought of patrol duty for Harry but knew the big kids would pick on him and he would quit. He didn't remember whether or not they had tried it but he knew it had been considered. I said I would want to be seeing him from time to time as we both worked with Harry.

11-7-49 Mr. G. said to me this morning that Harry had scored a point for his side last week. The other team was winning and Harry's point tied the score. I said I wondered if Harry were real pleased about this. Mr. G. seemed to think so and I told him I was glad to know about this because I think Harry needs to do things for his own pleasure sometimes and not to think always of pleasing others. He needs to become aware of the fact that what he himself thinks as well as what others think about him is important.

12-2-49 Conference with Mrs. A. On Monday Mrs. A. said to me, "I told Harry Brown's mother how lazy and careless he is." Once before she had said she sent a note home saying he was playing around and not doing his work as well as he could. I said to Mrs. B. that I had recently talked with Harry's mother and I felt that we needed to schedule a conference when we could talk about Harry.

Already having a good working relationship with Mrs. A. concerning another child, I felt that I could go directly into a discussion of Harry's problem with her. I mentioned his last report card which had three U's. She said she wasn't sure that he was doing any better. He wastes time. He could do better. She checked his record and found his I. Q. was 115 on one test and 105 on another. I said sometimes children with average or superior mental ability fail because other things are blocking their learning. We agreed that while intelligence tests have value they cannot be accepted alone as absolutely indicative of a child's ability.

Then I told Mrs. A. something about Harry's mother and her attitude toward him; that in many ways she is over indulgent and over protective which may be responsible for his babyishness and irresponsibility; that on the other hand she is very ambitious for him and seems to be over strict in her demands to have him *good*, make good marks, and in everything be a model child. I told her how severely she had dealt with him about the report card, whipping him, taking away such privileges as going to movies and Boy's Club and playing with other children except on Saturday and Sunday, and making him study every afternoon as soon as he gets home.

Although she had talked with his parents she hadn't realized his mother was doing all these things. She had even suggested taking away some privilege that he enjoyed most. I also told her that Harry is pretty anxious about the next report card because if it isn't better he doesn't think he'll get much for Christmas. He said he didn't have to make A—just so he doesn't have a U.

By this time Mrs. A. was checking her grade book to actually see what Harry had done since the last report. She found that he was doing better than she thought.

I told Mrs. A. that I had found from talking with Harry that he always thinks about things in terms of what someone else wants (mostly his mother) and that I have felt one thing he needs is to want to do things because of his own feelings or for his own satisfaction.

Mrs. A. immediately came through with plans to help Harry. She hoped I could get the mother to relieve him of some pressure at home about school work after the next report card. She would talk with Harry about what his school work meant to him and about how whatever he did with it was for himself, not for her (although she was interested and concerned) or for someone else. She will talk with him right away and try to help him see what he can begin to do even before the next report card.

We then talked about the possibility that the pressure and anxiety he felt might very probably have been getting in the way of his progress. If these can be lessened, we will both be interested in seeing what happens.

12-2-49 Conference with Mr. Green—observation. Mr. Green told me a few days ago that Harry was showing improvement but was still pretty fearful of getting hurt. He has noticed that he isn't as "silly" as he was. I said perhaps he had been covering up fears with "silliness" and that as he became less afraid he might not need this defense.

I observed in physical education class today during a volley ball game. When Harry served two good balls out of three Mr. Green was so pleased he came over to tell me that at the beginning of the semester Harry couldn't get the ball near the net. He seemed to enjoy the game, and although he dodged a few balls as if afraid of being hit it was not more noticeable than with some other boys. In coaching Mr. G. remarked a time or two, "Don't be afraid of the ball. It won't hurt you." No one was hurt and I thought it was good for him to say that.

JACK—

The following summary of five conferences with a teacher shows how her understanding and acceptance of a child changed in a short period of time.

Jack, age 8, grade 3, was referred through the principal by his new teacher a few days after school started. Jack was new in the school but told the teacher that he had been expelled from another school until his father went to the school and arranged for him to re-enter.

In the first conference with Mrs. S. I could tell that she was very upset because she was afraid that she could not handle Jack at all. He was openly defiant when things didn't please him. He had jumped out of a window, stamped his feet when Mrs. S. told him to sit down and had talked right back to her before the whole class. The more pressure she put on him the more rebellious he became. The only thing that had calmed him down at all was sending him to the principal who threatened a whipping if he didn't "straighten up". Mrs. S. said she felt like resigning if Jack were allowed to remain in school. She did not believe she could cope with Jack in the classroom situation. I said that I could see that Mrs. S. felt uneasy all the time for fear of what might happen next. Mrs. S. said this was true and she felt that she was not doing a good job of teaching the other children because she had to watch Jack all the time. I knew that this was very hard for Mrs. S. and wondered if she thought she could try with Jack a little longer if we worked together to try to help him. Mrs. S. said she was willing to try if I thought I could do anything with him. I attempted to interpret to Mrs. S. that I could not take over, that the only way I could help would be for us to work together. I said that I was not sure what we could do but that I wanted to help. I thought from the things she had told me that Jack was upset emotionally and I did not think his behavior indicated that she had failed. I thought perhaps after we knew more about him that she would probably find better ways of dealing with him. I felt that I could help by learning and sharing with her some of Jack's needs and that she as the teacher who was with him every day could find ways of meeting some of those needs. Mrs. S. seemed a little relieved to have talked with me and to feel that I was taking a little of the responsibility for Jack. I suggested that I talk with her again briefly after I had had an interview with Jack. She was eager to know how he had responded and was glad to know that he had said that he would like to try to get along better for one week. I made definite appointments to see both the next week. Mrs. S. was still somewhat apprehensive about what might happen but said if Jack were going to try that she would "handle him with kid gloves" and try not to put pressure on him.

SECOND CONFERENCE:

Mrs. S. felt a little better about the situation but was still uneasy and uncomfortable. She knew Jack had tried but just that day had lost his temper. She felt that he could not have gone another day without trouble. It was still taking too much of her time and thought for Jack. She just couldn't keep her mind on her other work. I knew this was bothering her and said that anyone would have a hard time carrying on when there was a constant fear or dread that something could happen. I wondered what effect her constant attention had had on Jack. Mrs. S. said it made him worse sometimes but she is afraid to let anything go

unnoticed. If she stops him from one thing he starts another. I knew she could not help the feeling she had to watch him but thought whenever she could let him know she could trust him a little he might respond to that in a positive way. Jack was the oldest of five children in an economically poor home. It was my impression from a home visit that much was expected of Jack. He paid little attention to his Mother's constant scolding but was afraid of his father who used severe punishment at times. At this point Mrs. S. became more sympathetic towards Jack. Again Mrs. S. said that she could go on because she had seen that Jack was trying and she realized that his problem was deeper than just misbehavior. I tried to help Mrs. S. see that Jack was using the only way he knew to face difficult situations and perhaps in time we could help him find more acceptable ways. Mrs. S. showed in her attitude and manner that she felt my support and did not feel that I was blaming her for not being able to deal successfully with Jack. Again she said that she would continue with him only because I was working with him, too.

THIRD CONFERENCE:

Mrs. S. felt that she was relaxing her constant watch of Jack a little. He was still doing very annoying little things though which she could not always overlook. I wondered if Mrs. S. thought this might have developed into a sort of battle between her and Jack. She thought this might be true and said she could try overlooking some of the things he did. I told her I would try to help Jack see that that might be what he was doing, too. I talked with Mrs. S. again after seeing Jack. She was encouraged that he told me all the things he had done and was willing to keep trying to get along better. I told her that he thought she was better to him now than at first. This pleased Mrs. S. as she had tried to make Jack feel that she liked him. Mrs. S. was concerned when I told her that I would have to miss the next two weeks in her school. She felt that Jack could just go one week at a time and was always on the verge of an outburst when I came. I told her that I had tried to prepare him for waiting and that we had marked a calendar for our next appointment. I realized that it was not good to miss an appointment with him right now but I had to be away and we would see how Jack reacted. In discussing this I used "we" a good bit in trying to give Mrs. S. the feeling that I, too, was sharing with her the responsibility for helping Jack.

FOURTH CONFERENCE:

Mrs. S. greeted me with, "If you hadn't been coming back I would resign if I had to keep Jack in my room." He had really been acting out. She thought from the time I told him I would not be there the next week, he had been upset. The last few days had been terrible. He had thrown his books in an adjoining field and had talked more rebelliously than at any time since the first few weeks. I wondered if Mrs. S. thought she could keep trying with Jack. Oh, yes, she didn't want to quit now if I would keep seeing him. She was beginning to feel that we knew a little bit about him and she could understand some of his behavior. I pointed out that I thought my being away had felt like rejection to Jack. I thought being the older of five children and only eight years old might have made him feel rejected many times when his parents had to give so much time to the younger children. Being expelled from school had also meant that he was not wanted.

Although I had tried to prepare him for my being away, this showed that just telling did not always change feelings about things. Mrs. S. was very interested in what I said and I felt that she became less afraid of Jack and what he could do to her as she began feeling with him.

FIFTH CONFERENCE:

When I went for my next appointment Mrs. S. came to tell me that Jack had moved. With tears in her eyes she told of his last day and how he hated to leave. She said she had hated so much to see him go because she felt that we were just beginning to understand him and knew a little bit about dealing with him. She was afraid of what would happen when he got to a new teacher who didn't understand his behavior. Mrs. S. said she knew teaching her third grade would be easier without Jack but she felt that it would have been so much better for him if he could have stayed. (She did not know then where Jack moved but later found out and talked with his teacher in an adjoining county.)

THOMAS—

Thomas, age 9, grade 4, was referred early in the school year by the new principal who said that he felt that both Thomas and his teacher needed help. The principal said that Thomas was having trouble in the classroom and had been involved in several fights on the playground sometimes picking on younger children. Thomas seemed to feel that everyone was against him.

I knew Thomas from brief contacts with him and his parents when he was referred by his first grade teacher because she thought his family needed financial assistance in getting glasses for Thomas and having his tonsils removed. They were referred to the proper source and received this assistance.

I learned from the principal and Thomas' first and second grade teachers that he had been considered a "problem" during most of his school days. He was described as a "bad little boy" but they felt that his mother's attitude towards school and life in general was largely responsible for Thomas' attitude and had seemed to take it for granted that there was not much help for Thomas.

The principal had talked with the teacher, Mrs. W., about referring Thomas. She had said that she wanted to help Thomas and would like to talk to me. I had not worked with Mrs. W. before as she had joined the faculty during my absence the year before. When I approached her saying that the principal had told me that she would like to talk with me about Thomas she was eager to tell me about his difficulties and expressed a great deal of concern because she had not been able to help him overcome them. She discussed at length his unacceptable behavior in the classroom—failure to do his school work and always answering back when she called his attention to this, disturbing the class and loudly protesting when she corrected him. I said that I knew all this was hard for her to accept when she had the whole group to think of. Mrs. W. said that she just could not have it but seemed helpless to do anything about it. She felt that she had usually been successful in reaching her pupils in some way but everything failed with Thomas. She was pretty well conditioned by conferences with the other teachers (those who had taught him and those who had observed) that he was "just bad". She very earnestly told me how she had talked and talked to

him about doing right. Mrs. W. wanted any help I could give her. I said that I knew from what she had told me that she wanted to help Thomas and that I felt that would be one of the most important points in our working together. I thought it was good that she had tried the things which she had found effective with other children. We talked about the long standing of Thomas' difficulties in school and the influence of his mother's attitude. I wondered if she felt that Thomas' problems might be more deep seated and of a different kind than some others she had dealt with successfully. Mrs. W. said she knew this was true. I pointed out that I did not think she had failed with Thomas but had recognized that he needed not only the help she as teacher could give him but also something in addition to that which was a different kind of help. I wondered if Mrs. W. thought that her talking to him about doing right might have felt to him that she was saying he was bad, too, since he had come to think that everyone was against him. Mrs. W. seemed to realize that Thomas' feelings about himself and his way of dealing with school situations were important. I said if we could work with Thomas in such a way that he would want to change I felt that we could help him. Mrs. W. then thought of ways in which she might reward him for "good behavior". Her idea was to get him to earn privileges and her approval. I did not question this plan as I felt that Mrs. W. had moved forward a good bit in her thinking of Thomas and understanding of his problems. I decided to try to help Thomas to accept this plan and work with Mrs. W.

When I saw Mrs. W. two weeks later she was pleased with her plan of helping Thomas. She thought that he had responded well most of the time but sometimes slipped back into his old pattern. She seemed to have a need to "tell on" Thomas for the times he didn't conform. She seemed a little surprised when I told her that Thomas had said he was unhappy and dissatisfied about the way he was getting along in school and wanted to do something about it. I thought Mrs. W. had done a good job in beginning to help Thomas and tried to help her see that it was natural that he would slip back at times and not be able to change all at once. This was a little hard for Mrs. W. to accept emotionally, although she did accept it intellectually. She verbalized well her understanding that Thomas did not get the way he was all at once and that we could not expect him to change suddenly without regressing to his former patterns of behavior at times.

SUMMARY OF SEVERAL CONFERENCES WITH MRS. W.:

I saw Mrs. W. and Thomas every two weeks for about four months except occasionally when I had to miss a visit to their school. For several conferences Mrs. W. needed a good bit of support from me to go on with her plan of helping Thomas. One day I asked if Mrs. W. thought it might be hard for Thomas to "earn" all the privileges and extra attention she gave him. We discussed his efforts to become accepted by the group by bringing anything he could to share with them. (I learned this from Thomas and Mrs. W.) Mrs. W. thought that perhaps she was expecting too much of Thomas. During this time I was aware of a change in Mrs. W.'s attitude towards Thomas. The more she invested of herself in trying to understand Thomas and his feelings about things the more she thought in terms of helping him to set and achieve his own goals rather than have him conform to her standards for him. Thomas became very interested in his school work and brought something in to show me in almost every interview.

He talked a lot about playing with other boys and how well he was getting along.

During the last few conferences of this period Mrs. W. moved away from her need to "tell on" Thomas for all the times he had not conformed. She no longer seemed to feel that she or Thomas had failed each time he regressed. She wanted to talk with me every time I visited the school. At first she was concerned about whether or not Thomas was telling me when things didn't go well the same as when they did. After I assured her in several conferences that he did this and was just as anxious as we were to do something about it, Mrs. W. began sharing with me the positives and negatives as she saw them in the way she was working with Thomas and the way he responded. Often she began a conference with "I want to tell you what I did and I don't know whether it was right or not." I always said I couldn't tell her whether or not it was right but that we might find the answer in looking at what happened as a result. Mrs. W. had less need for constant support in everything she tried with Thomas. When she could admit comfortably that perhaps something she had done had not been the best for Thomas, I thought we could look at the situation and evaluate it. I reassured her many times that I wasn't too concerned about her hurting Thomas because of her understanding and acceptance of him as a person and her real feeling of wanting to help him make a satisfactory adjustment to school.

LAST CONFERENCE WITH MRS. W.:

As we looked back over the past few months and our work with Thomas Mrs. W. seemed most impressed about the way he had recognized and worked on his own problem. She emphasized how far he had come and how little he has slipped back into his old patterns of behavior. She pointed out that he hadn't got this way in a little while and she didn't expect a "miracle". Said he hadn't regressed nearly as often as she thought he would. (This isn't exactly the way she felt during the first few weeks but I did not point this out since I do not feel that I am doing casework with Mrs. W. but working with her as another professional person.) When I said I felt that Mrs. W. had done a mighty good job in helping Thomas she immediately said that I had helped both of them. She thought his interviews with me had been the key to this success. (From the beginning she was able to tell me how much he looked forward to his appointments. I believe she could do this because I recognized her strategic position as teacher and verbalized this in our first conference as I began interpreting the role of the visiting teacher— supplementing or complimenting the teacher's work but in no way ever taking her place.) I said that I thought what both of us had done was important and that we had both helped Thomas in different ways to help himself. Mrs. W. said she guessed this was true. I then asked her directly if she did not feel that she had done a good job with Thomas. She admitted that she thought so and seemed very happy about it. I said it was hard for us to say, "I did a good job," but that we could say it to each other. Throughout the conference Mrs. W. had a kind of glow about her and I had the feeling that she had a "sense of well-being". I saw Mrs. W. later the same day and she wanted me to see another teacher in the school. She has been telling her about our work with Thomas and this teacher has a child with whom she needs some help. Mrs. W. believes she would like to talk with me although she has not referred the child.

She also believes from her own experience that together the teacher and I can help the child.

I will continue to see Thomas for a few more interviews and will see Mrs. W. but I feel that my work with her concerning Thomas is really finished.

Mrs. W. told me that other teachers had commented to her about the change they had noticed in Thomas. They have also talked with me about this. Thomas still gets into trouble on the playground occasionally and we all know that he still has problems to cope with but he is a much happier little boy and children and teachers feel very differently about him.

The principal feels that Thomas is going to be all right now and says that he is aware of a change in Mrs. W.'s attitude and manner of dealing with her whole class.

These conferences were selected because they seemed to show the visiting teacher and the teacher working together in a co-operative, inter-professional, sharing relationship which contributed or could have contributed (in the case of Jack) effectively to the child's school adjustment. Helping the child to make better use of his school experience was the focus in each case; however there are indications that three teachers changed in their understanding of and attitudes toward the child during the time they worked with the visiting teacher. It is my feeling that greater understanding and changed attitudes on the part of the teacher as a result of a successfully shared relationship between teacher and visiting teacher can and should be a far reaching factor in fostering better human relationships and mental health in our schools today.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a professional organization is a strengthening factor for the individual practicing within that profession. This is as true for the school social worker as it has long been for members of other professions. National Association of School Social Workers has members in 38 states and in Hawaii, Puerto Rico and India.

All members receive the National Association of School Social Workers Bulletin and other materials such as Newsletter, book lists, conference programs, notices, and other publicity. Membership is determined by the training and experience of the applicant.

Applications for membership and a statement of membership requirements may be obtained from the Membership Chairman, Mrs. Helen Roell, Indianapolis Public Schools, 150 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

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